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WESTERN

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NO. 28

IN THIS ISSUE: **THE ROAMING DEAD MEN!**

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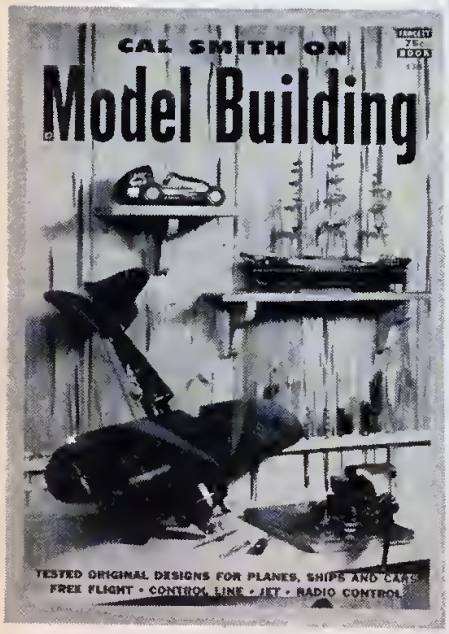
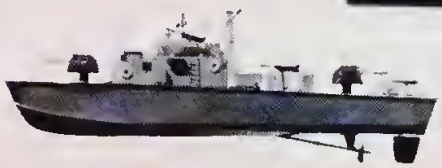


Original TESTED designs for

PLANES

BOATS



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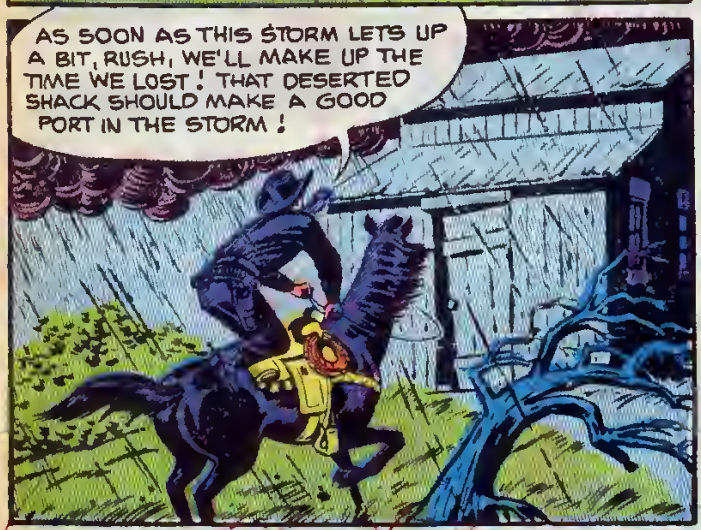

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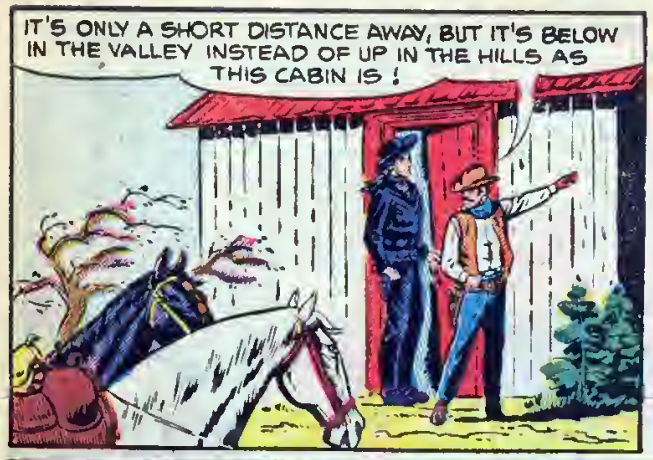
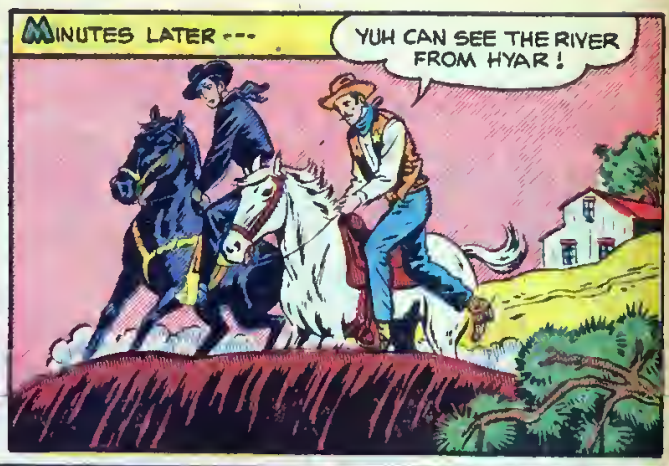
BUT AS THE ROVING MARSHAL LIES DOWN ---
OH, EXCUSE ME! I THOUGHT THIS PLACE WAS DESERTED! HAD I KNOWN ANYONE LIVED HERE, I WOULD NEVER HAVE ENTERED AND MADE MYSELF AT HOME, STORM OR NO STORM!
RELAX, MISTER! WE'RE HERE FOR THE SAME REASON YUH ARE...A PORT IN THE STORM!
THAT'S RIGHT, PARDNER! WE THOUGHT WE MIGHT FIND SOME EXTRA BEDS DOWN IN THE CELLAR!
SINCE YOU WERE HERE FIRST, YOU'RE ENTITLED TO THE COUCH!
YUH CAN KEEP IT! THERE WERE NO OTHER BEDS DOWN IN THE CELLAR --- AND ONE COUCH IS NO GOOD FOR THE THREE OF US!
WE'LL SHOVE OFF AND LOOK ELSEWHERE! SO LONG!
AND AFTER THE STORM SUBSIDES...
HERE WE ARE, RUSH!
RAPID FALLS JAILHOUSE
LASH LaRUE REPORTING, SHERIFF! I'M SORRY I'M LATE, BUT THE STORM DELAYED ME!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, LASH! THE CASE I SENT FER A MARSHAL TO HELP ME OUT ON IS CLOSED!
THREE BANDITS RODE BY THE BANK YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, THREW A BOMB IN AND BLEW THE WHOLE PLACE UP! THEN IN THE EXCITEMENT, THEY RAN OFF WITH ALL THE LOOSE MONEY --- ABOUT TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!
WANTED
THERE WERE TWO MEN IN THE BANK AT THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION --- BOTH WERE KILLED, BUT ONE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO DESCRIBE THE BANDITS! THAT'S WHEN I CONTACTED THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE FOR HELP, BUT ---
WANTED

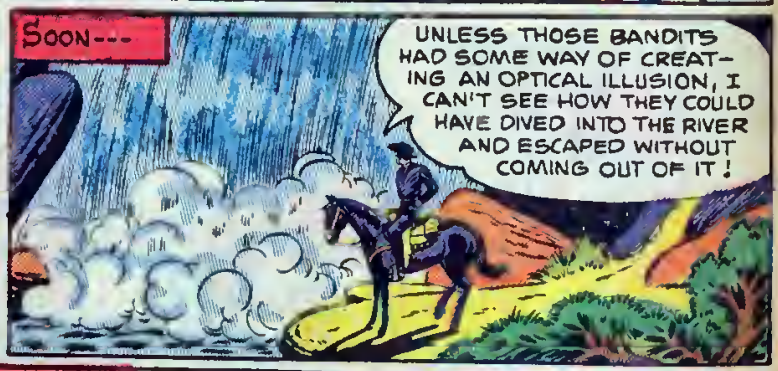
---ON MY WAY BACK TO THE JAILHOUSE, I SPOTTED THE EVIL TRIO AND CHASED THEM!
BUT IF YOU CAUGHT THEM, HOW COME THEY'RE NOT IN ANY OF THE CELLS?
I DIDN'T SAY I CAUGHT THEM! YUH SEE, I CHASED THEM ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE RIVER AND AS THEY TRIED TO CROSS IT, THEY GOT CAUGHT IN THE FALLS AND DROWNED!
WHAT ABOUT THE BANK MONEY? DID YOU FIND THAT?
NO! BY THE TIME I SPOTTED THE TRIO, THEY WERE EMPTY HANDED! THEY MUST HAVE ALREADY HIDDEN THE LOOT! BUT I'VE GOT A POSSE COMING TO HELP SEARCH THE HILLS FOR IT! THERE'S NO SENSE WASTING YOUR VALUABLE TIME DOING IT!
AT LEAST NOT WITHOUT THE CHIEF MARSHAL'S PERMISSION! HE ORDERED ME TO RETURN AS SOON AS THE CULPRITS WERE CAUGHT, SO I'LL BE GOING!
WANTED
I NEVER EXPECTED TO CATCH UP TO THOSE KILLERS SO SOON OR I WOULDN'T HAVE WASTED THE COUNTY'S MONEY ORDERING THESE NOW USELESS WANTED SIGNS!
HOLD IT, SHERIFF! LET ME HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT THAT!
WANTED
IF THOSE MEN ARE DEAD, THEY MUST BE ROAMING DEAD MEN! I JUST SAW THEM A SHORT WHILE AGO!
ARE YUH SURE, LASH?
WANTED- FOR MURDER AND BANK ROBBERY $1000 REWARD DEAD OR ALIVE
CHIMP
AXEL
AFTER LASH EXPLAINS---
BUT I DON'T SEE HOW THEY COULD POSSIBLY HAVE ESCAPED FROM THE RIVER! I WATCHED FER OVER AN HOUR AND NEVER SAW ONE OF THEM COME OUT OF THE WATER!
THAT DESERTED CABIN I FOUND THEM IN MIGHT HAVE BEEN THEIR HIDE-OUT! I SUGGEST WE GO UP AND SEARCH THE PLACE THOROUGHLY!
SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE CABIN---
I DIDN'T FIND A THING UPSTAIRS, LASH! HOW ABOUT YUH?
NOTHING DOWN HERE IN THE CELLAR, EITHER, SHERIFF!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD IT'LL DO, BUT I'D LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE RIVER IN WHICH THEY DISAPPEARED WHEN YOU CHASED THEM!
SURE THING, LASH!

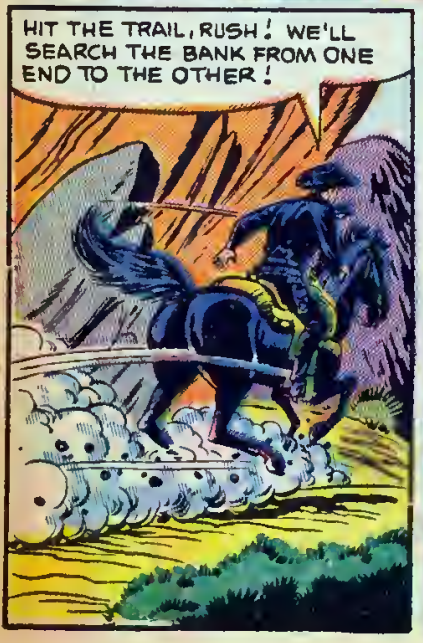

IT'S ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, BUT IT'S BELOW IN THE VALLEY INSTEAD OF UP IN THE HILLS AS THIS CABIN IS !

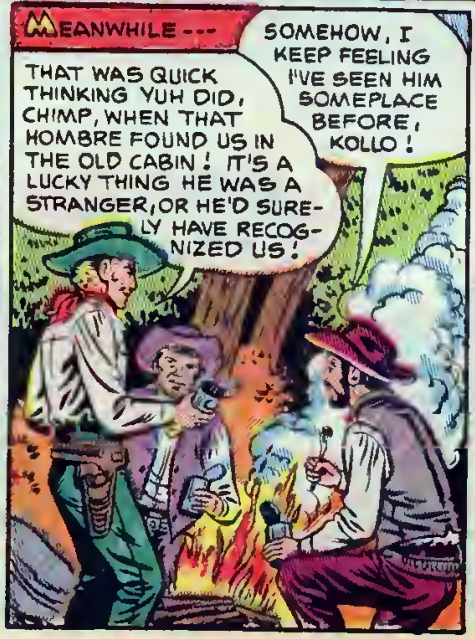

MINUTES LATER ---
YUH CAN SEE THE RIVER FROM HYAR !

THERE'S THE RIVER BELOW ! AND AS YUH CAN SEE, THE FALLS ARE CREATED BY ANOTHER RIVER RUNNING THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THE MOUNTAIN AND FEEDING INTO THE OTHER LOWER RIVER !
I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK BELOW !

IN THE MEANWHILE, I SUGGEST YOU GO BACK FOR YOUR POSSE AND HAVE THEM SPREAD OUT IN THESE HILLS ! MY GUESS IS THAT THOSE HOMBRES WILL STILL BE HIDING AROUND THESE PARTS UNTIL THEY FEEL IT'S SAFE TO DIG UP THEIR LOOT --- IF THEY HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY !
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA ! I'LL DO THAT RIGHT NOW !


SOON ---
UNLESS THOSE BANDITS HAD SOME WAY OF CREATING AN OPTICAL ILLUSION, I CAN'T SEE HOW THEY COULD HAVE DIVED INTO THE RIVER AND ESCAPED WITHOUT COMING OUT OF IT !


HIT THE TRAIL, RUSH ! WE'LL SEARCH THE BANK FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER !


MEANWHILE ---
THAT WAS QUICK THINKING YUH DID, CHIMP, WHEN THAT HOMBRE FOUND US IN THE OLD CABIN ! IT'S A LUCKY THING HE WAS A STRANGER, OR HE'D SURELY HAVE RECOGNIZED US !
SOMEHOW, I KEEP FEELING I'VE SEEN HIM SOMEPLACE BEFORE, KOLLO !

FERGET HIM ! NOW HOW ABOUT DIGGING UP THE LOOT AND GETTING OUT OF RAPID FALLS !
WHAT'S THE RUSH ? THE SHERIFF THINKS WE DROWNED, SO I RECKON IT'S BETTER TO LET THE WORD OF OUR DEATH SPREAD AROUND TOWN ! THEN WHEN EVERYONE STOPS LOOKING FOR US, WE CAN LEAVE SAFELY !

AXEL'S RIGHT, KOLLO! NOW WE BETTER SMOTHER THIS FIRE BEFORE ANYONE SEES THE SMOKE AND GETS CURIOUS ABOUT WHERE IT CAME FROM!
BUT ONE PERSON IS ALREADY CURIOUS, THE EVER-ALERT KING OF THE BULLWHIP, LASH LaRUE!
IF SOMEONE LEFT A FIRE GOING, WE'D BETTER STAMP IT OUT BEFORE THE WHOLE FOREST GOES UP IN FLAMES!
I TOLD YUH I HEARD SOMEONE RIDING UP! IT'S THAT STRANGER AGAIN!
LOOK AT THAT BULLWHIP! NOW I KNOW WHERE I SAW HIM BEFORE! IN LARADO! HE'S THE ROVING MARSHAL, LASH LaRUE!
ROVING MARSHAL! LET'S GET OUT OF HYAR!
IT'S THE KILLERS! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT, RUSH!
THE CLOSER I GET, THE BETTER TARGET I MAKE SO I'D BETTER DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!
BANG! BANG!
AND WITH AMAZING DISPLAY OF MARKSMANSHIP, THE ROVING MARSHAL UNARMS HIS FOES!
HE'S UNARMED US!
BANG! BANG! BANG!
HEAD FER THE RIVER! I KNOW THAT LAWDOG! HE'LL NEVER SHOOT US IN THE BACK!
I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM BEFORE THEY SEPARATE! THIS CALLS FOR SOME REAL TRICKY HANDLING OF THE BULLWHIP!

I'VE GOT ALL THEIR REINS! NOW TO PULL THEIR HORSES TO A STOP!
SNAP!
WHOA!
DIVE IN! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
THEY DIVED INTO THE RIVER AGAIN!
SPLASH!
WELL, I'M NOT AFRAID OF GETTING WET EITHER!
SPLASH!
THAT'S FUNNY! NOT A SIGN OF THEM DOWN HERE!
AND NOT A SIGN OF THEM UP HERE EITHER! BUT THEY COULDN'T HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!
MEANWHILE, THE SHOTS HAVE ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE SHERIFF AND HIS POSSE!
--SO IT'S JUST LIKE WHEN I CHASED THEM, LASH! THEY DIDN'T COME UP SO I THOUGHT THEY DROWNED!
WELL, SINCE THEY'RE NOT DOWN IN DAVEY JONES' LOCKER, AND THEY'RE NOT UP HERE, EITHER--

---THEY MUST BE BEHIND THIS FALLS!
SPLASH!

NO ONE'S HERE, EITHER!

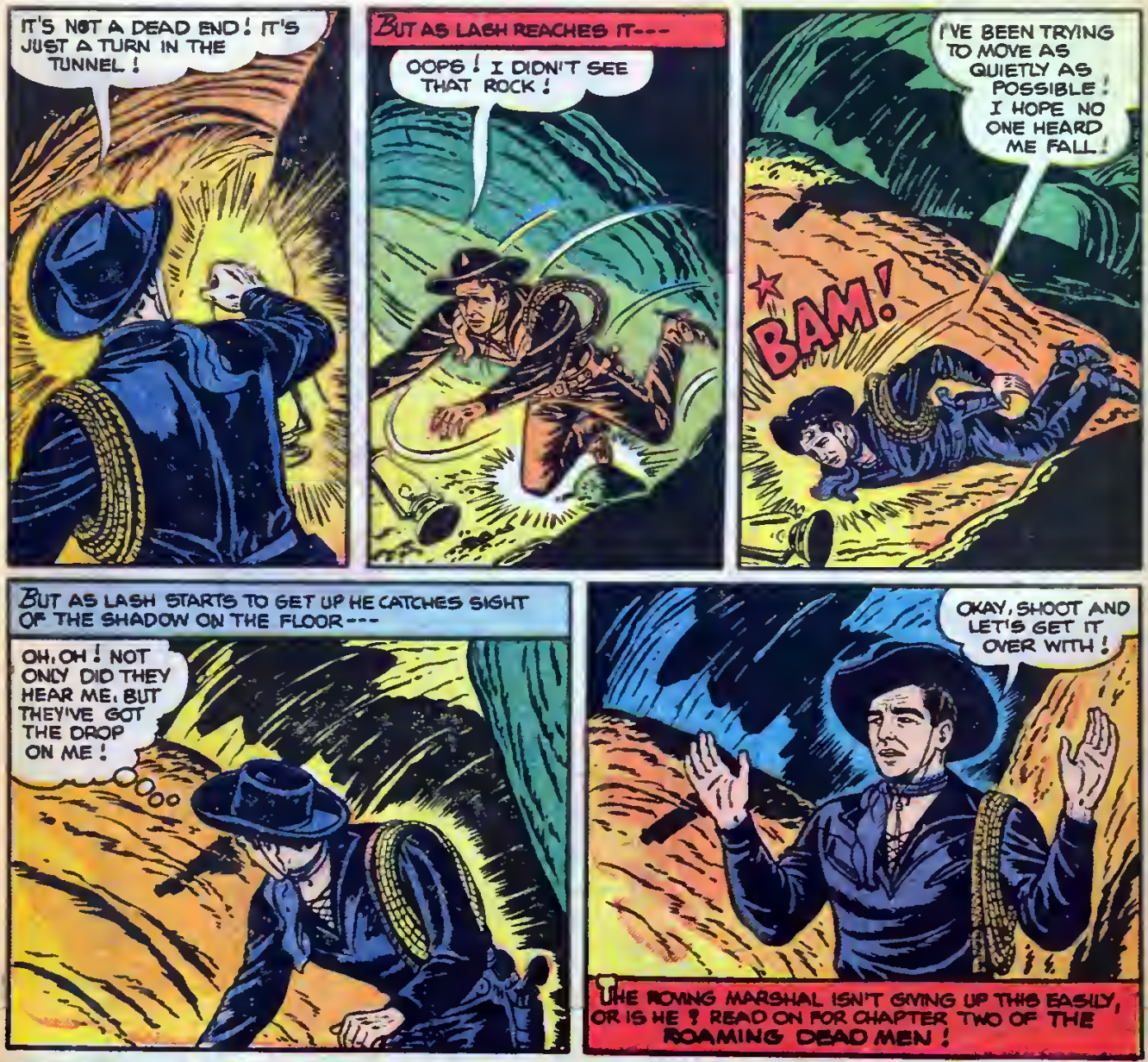
SINCE I DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC, THE ONLY EXPLANATION LEFT IS THAT THERE'S A SECRET ENTRANCE SOMEWHERE IN THIS WALL! THIS PART SOUNDS SOLID, THOUGH!
THUD
THUD

LASH TAPS HIS WAY ACROSS WHEN SUDDENLY----
THIS PART'S HOLLOW!
BOP
BOP
BOP

I WAS RIGHT! A HIDDEN TUNNEL! I'D BETTER LET THE SHERIFF IN ON WHAT I FOUND!

A FEW SECONDS LATER---
THIS TUNNEL IS SO NARROW, THE ONLY WAY WE COULD GO INTO IT IS SINGLE FILE---- AND IF THEY SHOULD BE IN THERE HIDING, THEY'D BE BOUND TO HEAR US COMING WHICH IS THE SAME AS COMMITTING SUICIDE!
I'LL TAKE THE CHANCE ALONE, SHERIFF! AND IT ISN'T BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO THINK I'M SO BRAVE! HERE'S WHAT I THINK---

AND AFTER LASH TELLS THE SHERIFF HIS PLAN----
OKAY, LASH, I'LL GET THE POSSE TO RIDE OFF WITH ME, AND FOR YOUR SAKE, I HOPE YOUR THEORY IS RIGHT!
FOR MY SAKE I HOPE SO, TOO!
SO FAR, NOTHING---AND THAT SEEMS TO BE A DEAD END UP AHEAD!


IT'S NOT A DEAD END! IT'S JUST A TURN IN THE TUNNEL!
BUT AS LASH REACHES IT---
OOPS! I DIDN'T SEE THAT ROCK!
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO MOVE AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE! I HOPE NO ONE HEARD ME FALL!
BAM!
BUT AS LASH STARTS TO GET UP HE CATCHES SIGHT OF THE SHADOW ON THE FLOOR---
OH, OH! NOT ONLY DID THEY HEAR ME, BUT THEY'VE GOT THE DROP ON ME!
OKAY, SHOOT AND LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!
THE ROVING MARSHAL ISN'T GIVING UP THIS EASILY, OR IS HE? READ ON FOR CHAPTER TWO OF THE ROAMING DEAD MEN!

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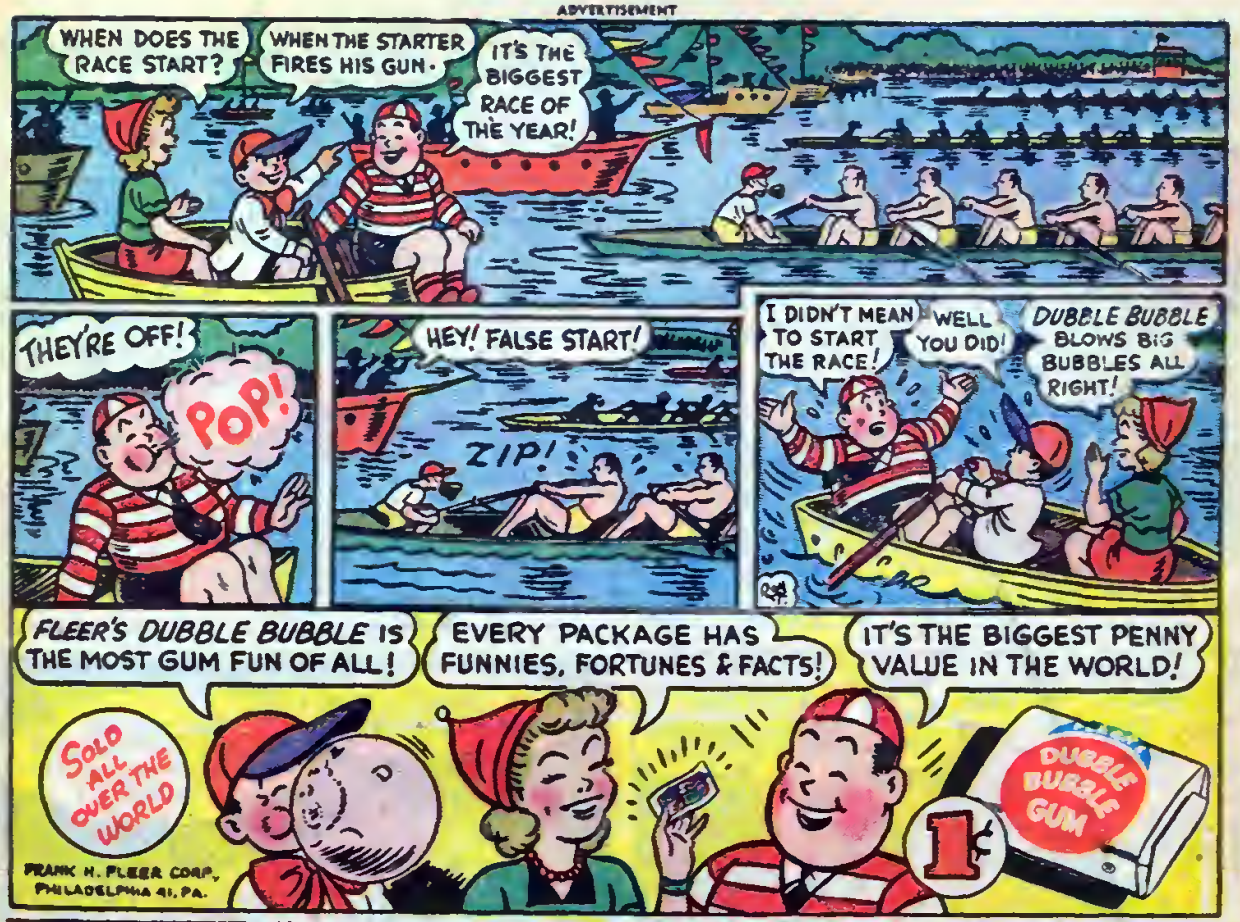
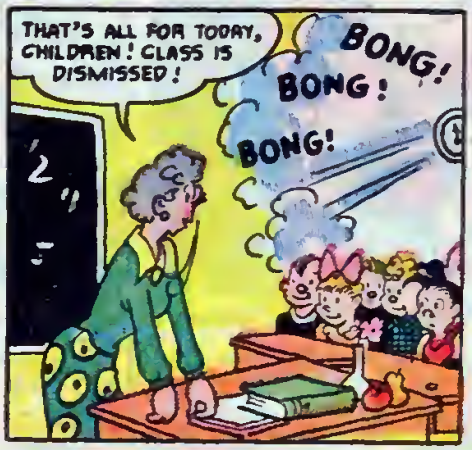
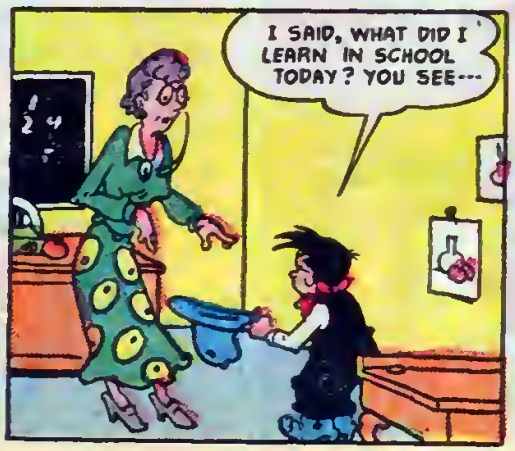
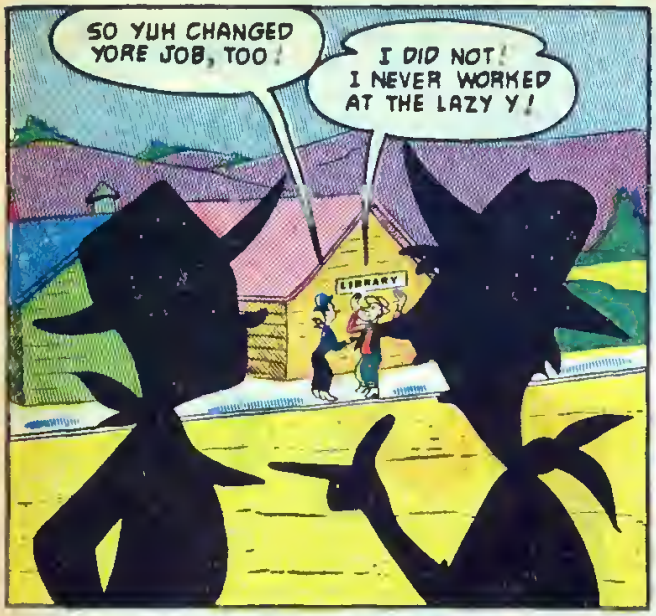




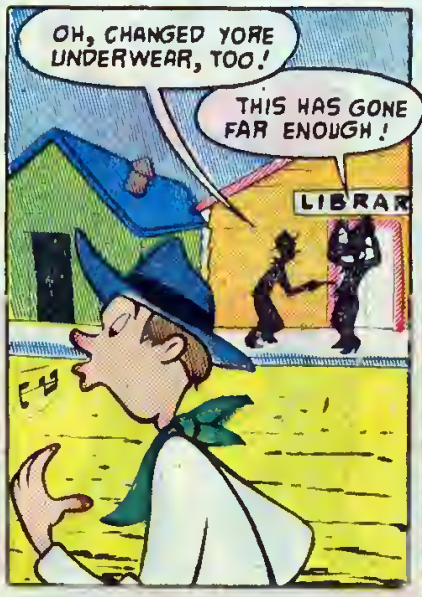


"A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE!"
DUSTY
LIBRARY
PUT UP YORE HANDS, TED! I KNOW ALL ABOUT YUH AND SPUD!
WAIT A MINUTE! I DON'T KNOW ANY SPUD! WHO'S SPUD?
SPUD'S MY HORSE! YUH KNOW THAT VERY WELL, TED!
BUT I NEVER SAW YORE HORSE--- BESIDES, MY NAME'S NOT TED!
OH, CHANGED YORE NAME, EH, TED?
I TELL YUH MY NAME'S NOT TED AND I DIDN'T CHANGE IT! IT'S DUSTY!
WHO EVER HEARD OF A NAME GETTING DUSTY!
MY NAME DIDN'T GET DUSTY! IT IS DUSTY! AND I NEVER CHANGED IT!
LIBRARY
DON'T YUH WORK UP AT THE LAZY Y RANCH?
I DO NOT!


SO YUH CHANGED YORE JOB, TOO!
I DID NOT! I NEVER WORKED AT THE LAZY Y!
LIBRARY

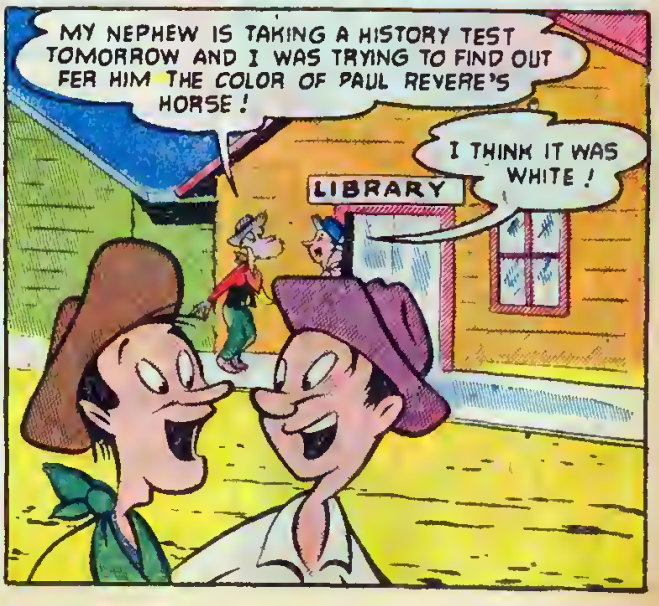
DON'T LIE TO ME, TED! I KNOW YUH RUSTLED MY HORSE, SPUD!
ME RUSTLE YORE HORSE? NOW I KNOW YO'RE PLUMB LOCO! YUH CAN EXAMINE MY HORSE! YUH'LL SEE IT'S NOT SPUD!

OF COURSE IT'S NOT SPUD! SPUD CAME RUNNING BACK TO ME, BUT I WARN YUH IF YUH EVER TRY TO RUSTLE HIM AGAIN, I'LL FILL YORE RED FLANNELS FULL OF LEAD!
I DON'T WEAR RED FLANNELS!


OH, CHANGED YORE UNDERWEAR, TOO!
THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!
LIBRAR

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE PAPERS! THEY'LL PROVE I'M NOT THE GUY YO'RE LOOKING FER!
I RECKON I OWE YUH AN APOLOGY!

YUH SURE DO! YOU WASTED A LOT OF MY VALUABLE TIME!
WHAT MAKES YORE TIME SO VALUABLE?

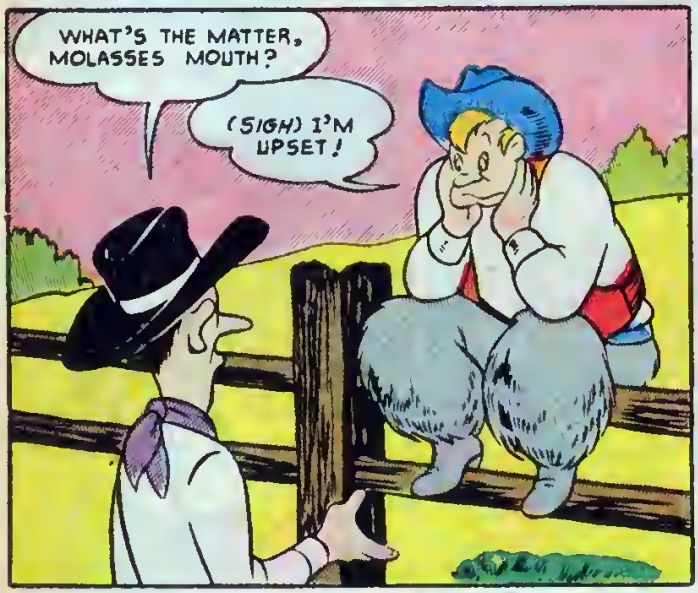

MY NEPHEW IS TAKING A HISTORY TEST TOMORROW AND I WAS TRYING TO FIND OUT FER HIM THE COLOR OF PAUL REVERE'S HORSE!
I THINK IT WAS WHITE!
LIBRARY

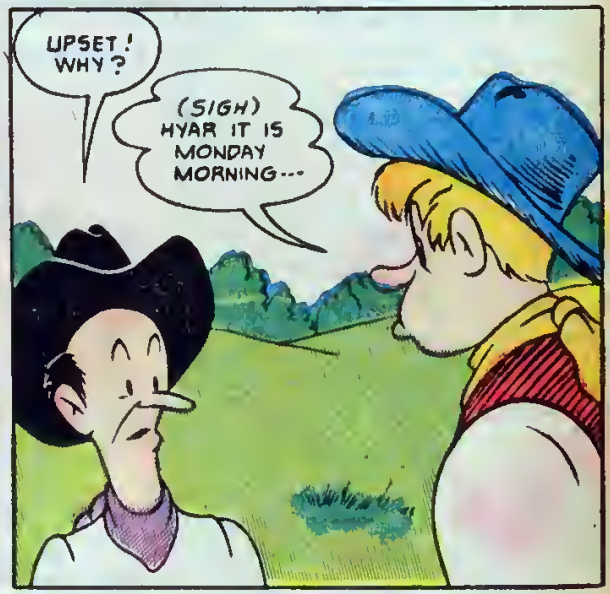
THAT'S FUNNY! I WAS SURE IT WAS A BLACK HORSE!
ANYONE CAN SEE BY LOOKING AT US THAT I'M SMARTER THAN YUH, SO IF I SAY IT WAS WHITE, IT WAS WHITE!
LOOK, STUPID, IF YUH SAY IT WAS WHITE, THEN I'M SURE IT WAS BLACK!
CALL ME STUPID AGAIN AND I'LL BLACKEN YORE EYES!
YUH AND WHO ELSE?
JUST ME! SAY ONE WORD AND I'LL PROVE IT!
IS THIS WORD GOOD ENOUGH?
BAM!
NO---AND YUH CAN TAKE MY WORD FER IT!
POW!
BAM!
SOK
POW!
HEY, YUH TWO! STOP THAT FIGHTING!
LIBR
I SAY STOP THAT FIGHTING!

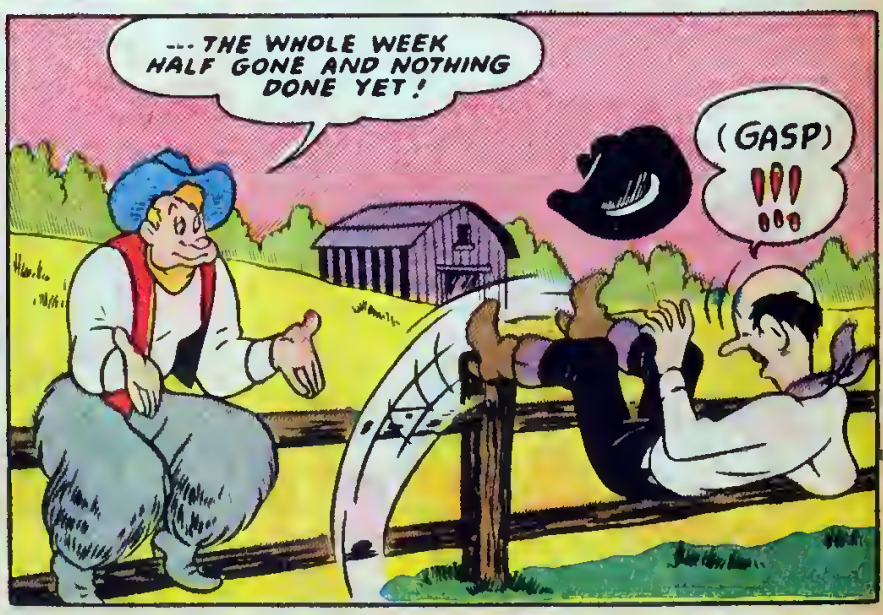
LET ME AT HIM! I'LL KILL HIM!
I'LL PULL HIM APART!
WHAT ARE YUH TWO HOMBRES BATTLING ABOUT ANYWAY?
HE'S TRYING TO TELL ME PAUL REVERE'S HORSE WAS WHITE!
AND HE SAYS IT WAS BLACK!
IT WAS WHITE! LET ME AT HIM!
IT WAS BLACK! LET ME AT HIM!
LIBRARY
HOLD IT, MEN! IF THAT'S ALL YO'RE FIGHTING ABOUT, I CAN SETTLE THE PROBLEM!
YUH MEAN YUH KNOW WHAT COLOR PAUL REVERE'S HORSE WAS?
I THINK SO!
WELL, WHAT WAS IT--- BLACK OR WHITE?
BROWN!
BROWN!
THIS WILL TEACH YUH TO TRY TO START AN ARGUMENT!
SMACK!
LET'S GO, PAL!
I'M WITH YUH, PAL!
PAL? I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO BUTT IN WHERE DUSTY WAS INVOLVED! NOTHING EVER MAKES SENSE WHEN HE'S AROUND!

MOLASSES MOUTH

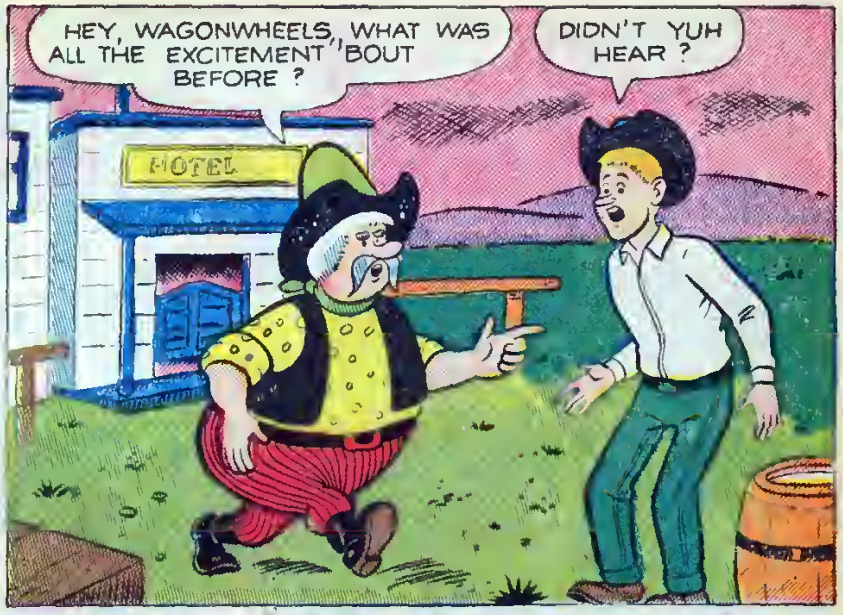
WEEK MINDED







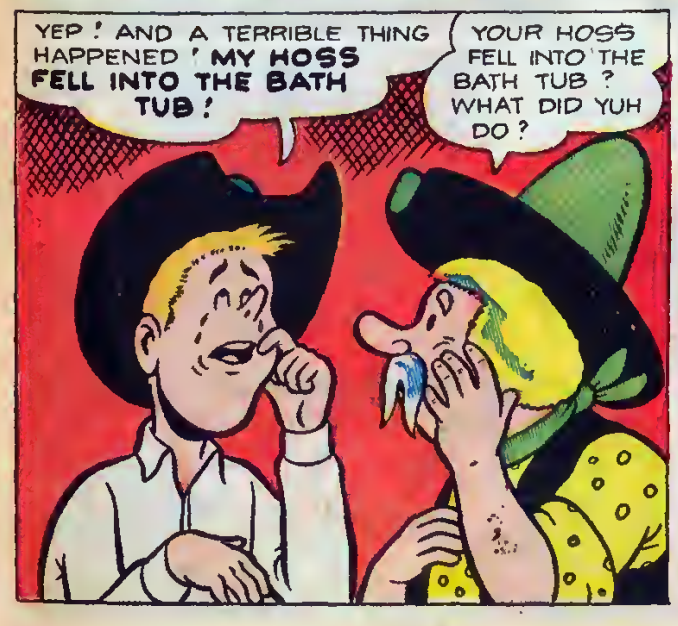
WAGONWHEELS
- PLUGGING ALONG!


HEY, WAGONWHEELS, WHAT WAS ALL THE EXCITEMENT 'BOUT BEFORE ?
DIDN'T YUH HEAR ?
HOTEL

JIM JEFFCOAT TRIED TO TAKE HIS HOSS INTO THE HOTEL !
WHAT ! HE TRIED TO TAKE HIS HOSS INTO THE HOTEL ?

YUP ! BUT THE MANAGEMENT WOULDN'T LET HIM DO IT !
I DON'T BLAME THEM ! I NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A FOOL THING !

SHUCKS, THAT'S NOT SO UNUSUAL ! I ONCE TOOK MY HOSS UP TO MY HOTEL ROOM !
HUH ? YUH DID ?


YEP ! AND A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENED ! MY HOSS FELL INTO THE BATH TUB !
YOUR HOSS FELL INTO THE BATH TUB ? WHAT DID YUH DO ?

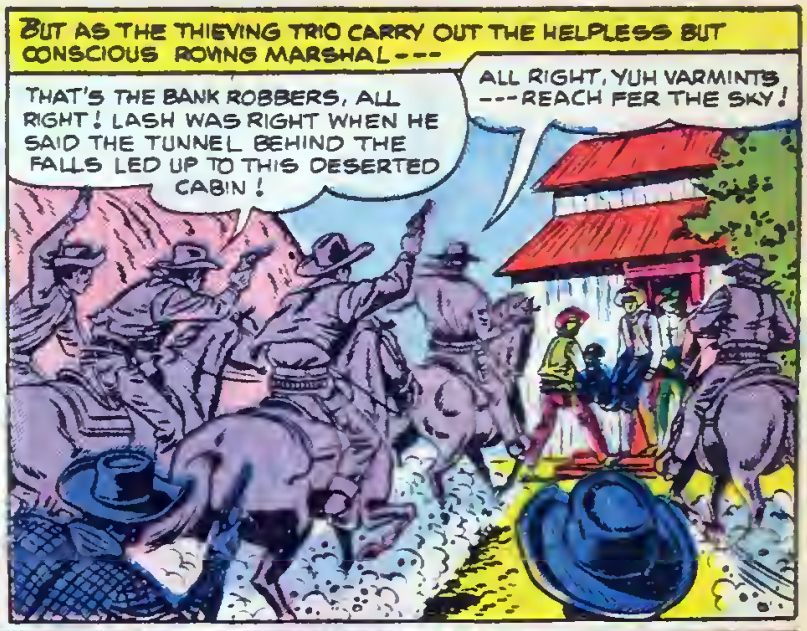
I PULLED OUT THE PLUG ! HA, HA !
(GASP) !!!

Lash LARUE
in the ROAMING DEAD MEN!
IF I CAN ONLY INCH BACK SO I CAN GET CLOSER TO THAT VARMINT, MAYBE I CAN KICK THAT GUN OUT OF HIS HAND! I HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BY TRYING, BECAUSE IF I DON'T SUCCEED I'M GOING TO LOSE MY LIFE ANYWAY!
CHAPTER TWO
THE HUMAN SHIELD
OH, MY FOOT!
WHACK!
A STONE FORMATION! IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE A PERFECT FOOL---

---BUT IT'S BETTER THAN FEELING LIKE A CORPSE!
NOW I'VE REACHED A REAL DEAD END---
---UNLESS THERE'S ANOTHER TRAP DOOR HIDDEN IN THESE WALLS!
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
REAL SOLID!
THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THOSE KILLERS ESCAPED THROUGH THIS TUNNEL! BUT THEY MUST HAVE GOTTEN OUT SOMEPLACE OR I WOULD HAVE SEEN THEM!
WAIT A SECOND! I THINK I'VE GOT IT!
SNAP!
BOP!
BOP!
HOLLOW!

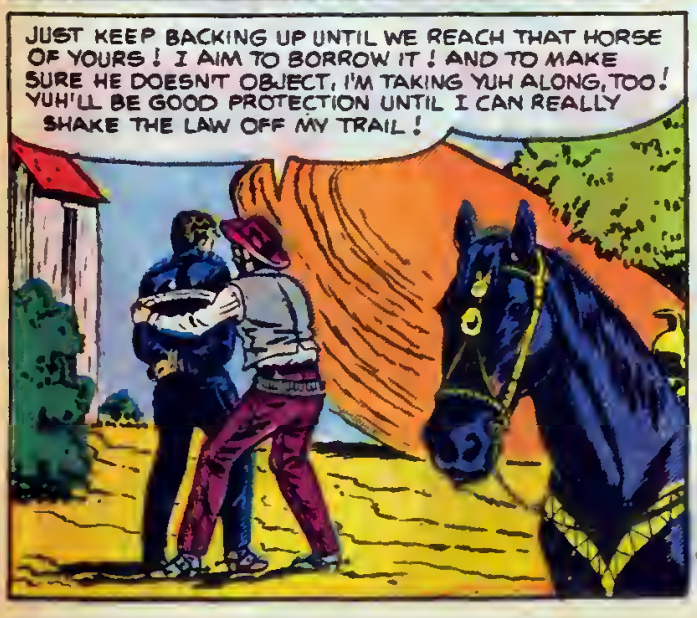
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED, IF WHAT I TOLD THE SHERIFF WAS RIGHT, THE OPENING WOULD HAVE BEEN ABOVE ME!
NOW TO DOUBLE CHECK ON WHERE THESE STEPS LEAD TO!
THAT LOOKS LIKE A SLIDING PANEL!
IT IS!
P-S-S-T! THE SLIDING PANEL! IT'S OPENING!
AND AS LASH COMES THROUGH---
IT'S THE LAWMAN, LaRUE! I'D BETTER PUT A BULLET THROUGH HIM!
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA, KOLLO! BUT NOT HERE!
SONK!
IF SOME PASSERBY SHOULD HEAR THE SHOT, IT WOULD MEAN THE END OF OUR USING THIS CABIN WITH ITS TERRIFIC SECRET TUNNEL AS A PERFECT GETAWAY! I'LL TIE HIM UP AND THEN WE'LL TAKE HIM OUT INTO THE WOODS AND FILL HIM FULL OF LEAD!
CHIMP'S RIGHT, KOLLO! THE FURTHER AWAY FROM HYAR THE BETTER!
YUH GO AHEAD, KOLLO AND SEE IF THE COAST IS CLEAR!

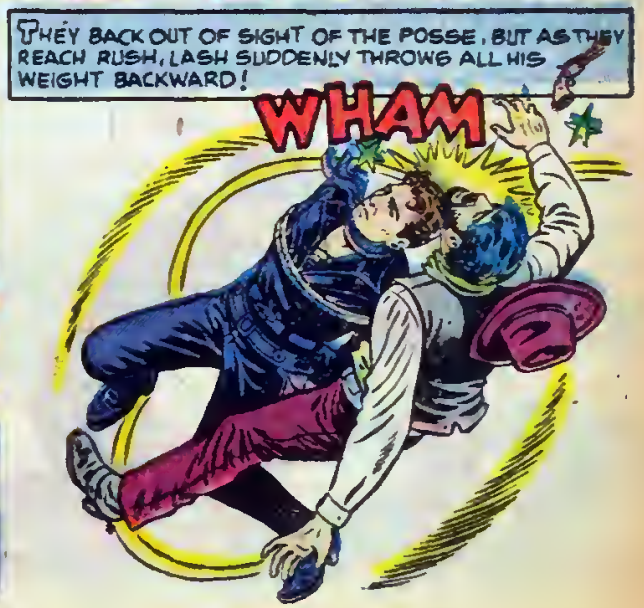
YUH CAN TAKE HIM OUT! THERE'S NO ONE AROUND!


BUT AS THE THIEVING TRIO CARRY OUT THE HELPLESS BUT CONSCIOUS ROVING MARSHAL---
THAT'S THE BANK ROBBERS, ALL RIGHT! LASH WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THE TUNNEL BEHIND THE FALLS LED UP TO THIS DESERTED CABIN!
ALL RIGHT, YUH VARMINTS ---REACH FER THE SKY!

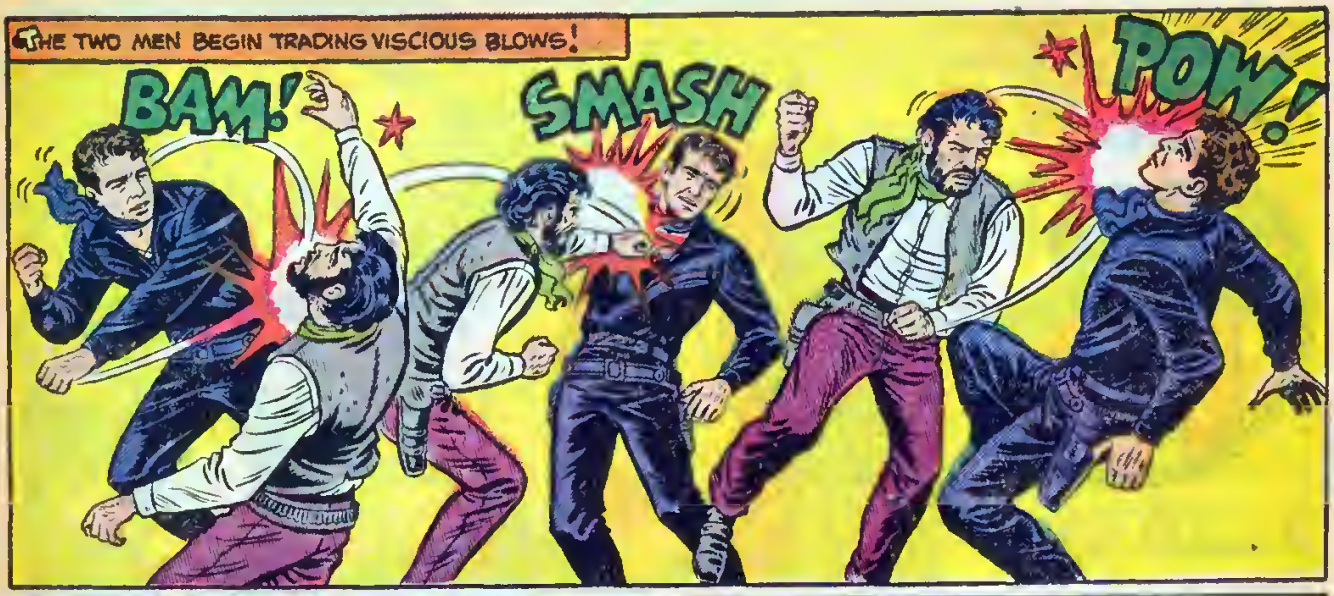
YUH'VE GOT MY TWO PARTNERS, BUT YUH DON'T HAVE ME---AT LEAST NOT AS LONG AS I HAVE THIS HUMAN SHIELD!

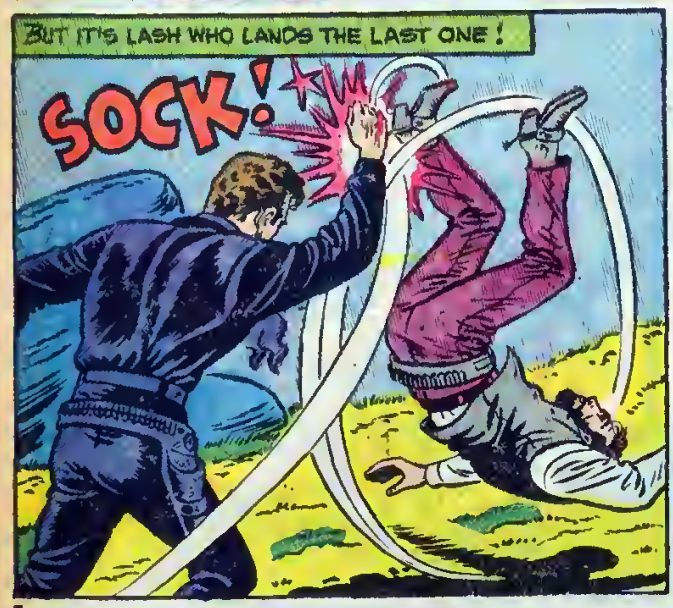
IF I SEE ONE OF YUH MAKE A MOVE, I'LL LET LaRUE HAVE A BULLET RIGHT IN HIS BACK!
BETTER NOT GO AFTER HIM, MEN!


JUST KEEP BACKING UP UNTIL WE REACH THAT HORSE OF YOURS! I AIM TO BORROW IT! AND TO MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T OBJECT, I'M TAKING YUH ALONG, TOO! YUH'LL BE GOOD PROTECTION UNTIL I CAN REALLY SHAKE THE LAW OFF MY TRAIL!

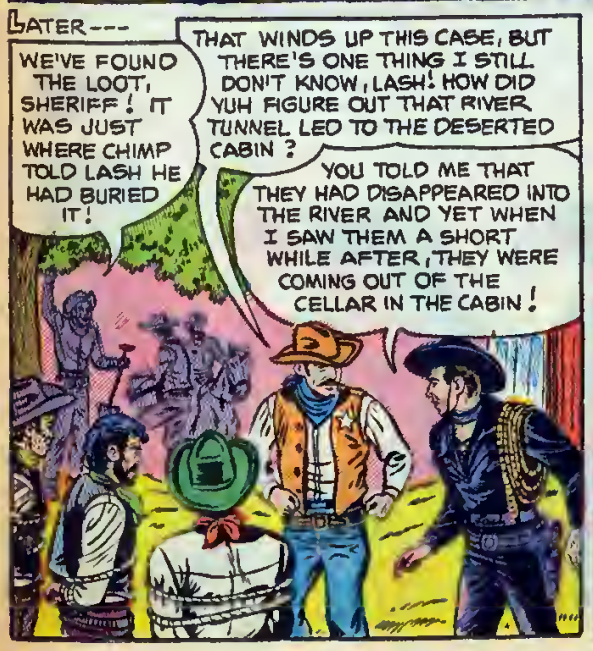

THEY BACK OUT OF SIGHT OF THE POSSE, BUT AS THEY REACH RUSH, LASH SUDDENLY THROWS ALL HIS WEIGHT BACKWARD!
WHAM

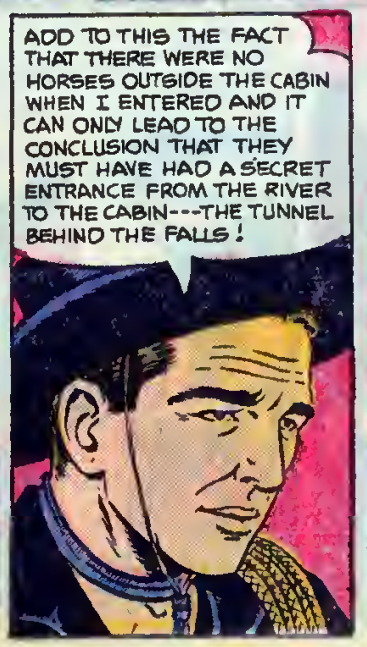
THAT TRICK WILL DO YUH NO GOOD! I'LL HAVE MY GUN IN MY HAND BEFORE YUH CAN EVEN GET UP TO RUN AWAY!
RUNNING AWAY IS THE LAST THOUGHT IN MY MIND! SEEING THAT YOU DON'T ESCAPE IS THE FIRST! NOW IF I CAN ONLY RIP THESE ROPES ON YOUR SPURS!
RIP!
EVEN FREEING YORE HANDS WON'T DO YUH ANY GOOD!
THEY WILL, BUT RIGHT NOW---
---A FREE FOOT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN A FREE HAND!
THERE GOES THE GUN AGAIN!
WHACK!
RIGHT, BUT THIS TIME IT'S NOT GOING TO FIND ITSELF BACK IN YOUR HAND!
POW
SMACK!

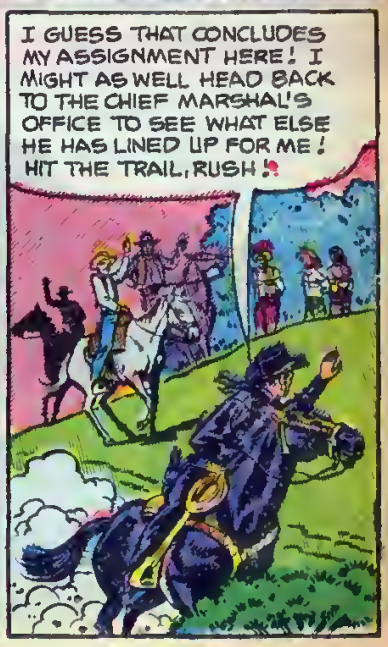

THE TWO MEN BEGIN TRADING VISCIOUS BLOWS!
BAM!
SMASH
POW!


BUT IT'S LASH WHO LANDS THE LAST ONE!
SOCK!

NOW YOU'RE GOING TO JOIN YOUR TWO PALS AND IF YOU DON'T WANT A REPEAT PERFORMANCE OF THIS SLUG FEST, YOU'D BETTER TELL WHERE YOU HID THE LOOT!
I'LL TALK!

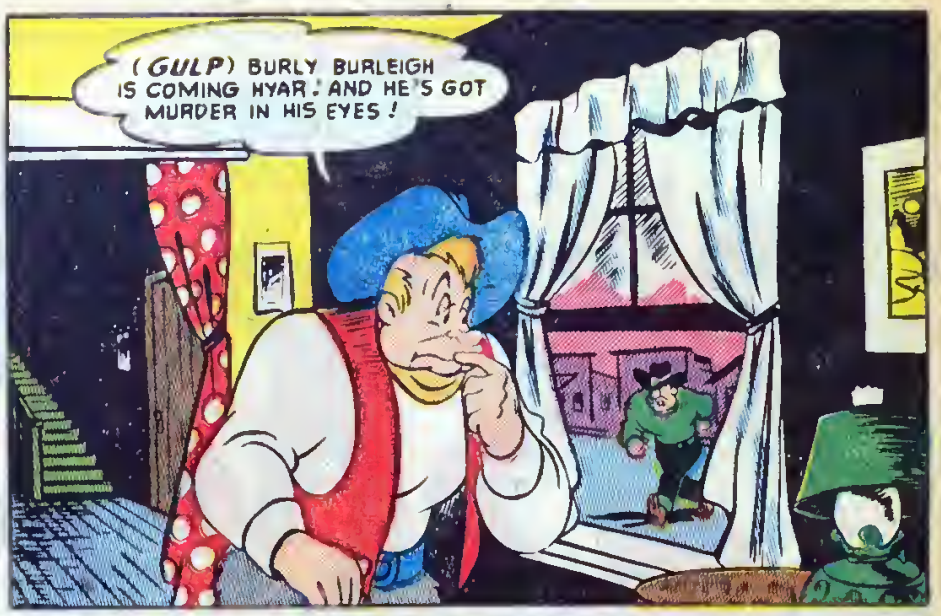

LATER---
WE'VE FOUND THE LOOT, SHERIFF! IT WAS JUST WHERE CHIMP TOLD LASH HE HAD BURIED IT!
THAT WINDS UP THIS CASE, BUT THERE'S ONE THING I STILL DON'T KNOW, LASH! HOW DID YUH FIGURE OUT THAT RIVER TUNNEL LED TO THE DESERTED CABIN?
YOU TOLD ME THAT THEY HAD DISAPPEARED INTO THE RIVER AND YET WHEN I SAW THEM A SHORT WHILE AFTER, THEY WERE COMING OUT OF THE CELLAR IN THE CABIN!

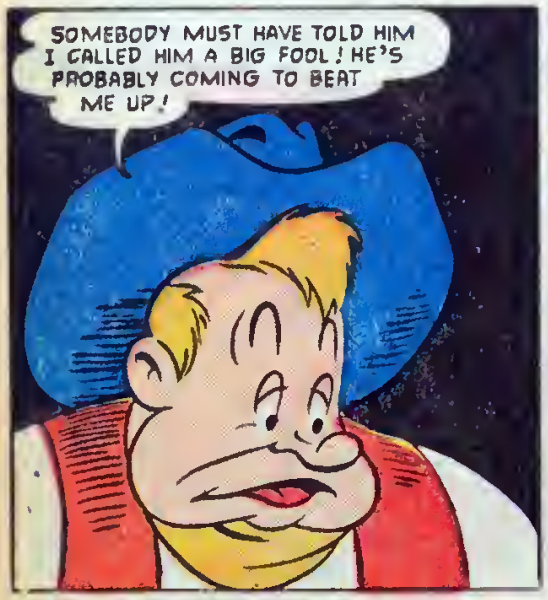

ADD TO THIS THE FACT THAT THERE WERE NO HORSES OUTSIDE THE CABIN WHEN I ENTERED AND IT CAN ONLY LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY MUST HAVE HAD A SECRET ENTRANCE FROM THE RIVER TO THE CABIN---THE TUNNEL BEHIND THE FALLS!

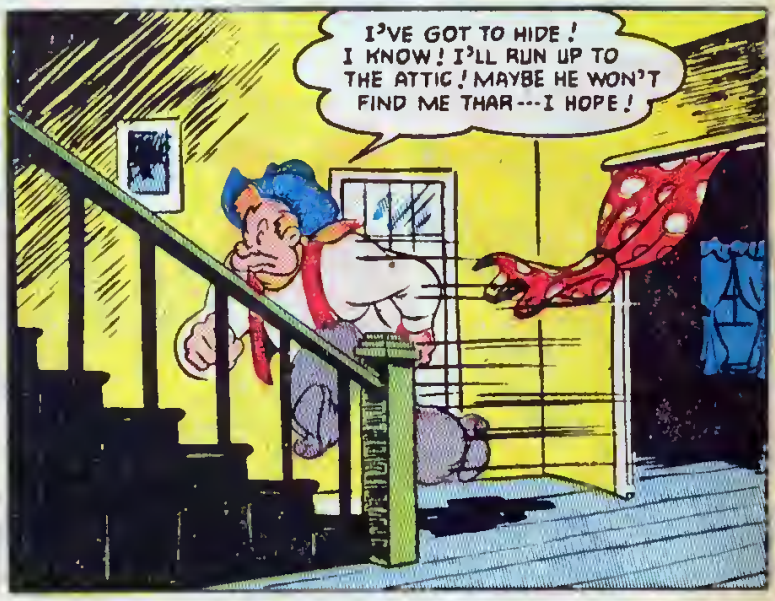

I GUESS THAT CONCLUDES MY ASSIGNMENT HERE! I MIGHT AS WELL HEAD BACK TO THE CHIEF MARSHAL'S OFFICE TO SEE WHAT ELSE HE HAS LINED UP FOR ME! HIT THE TRAIL, RUSH!

MOLASSES MOUTH

A GOOD HIDER

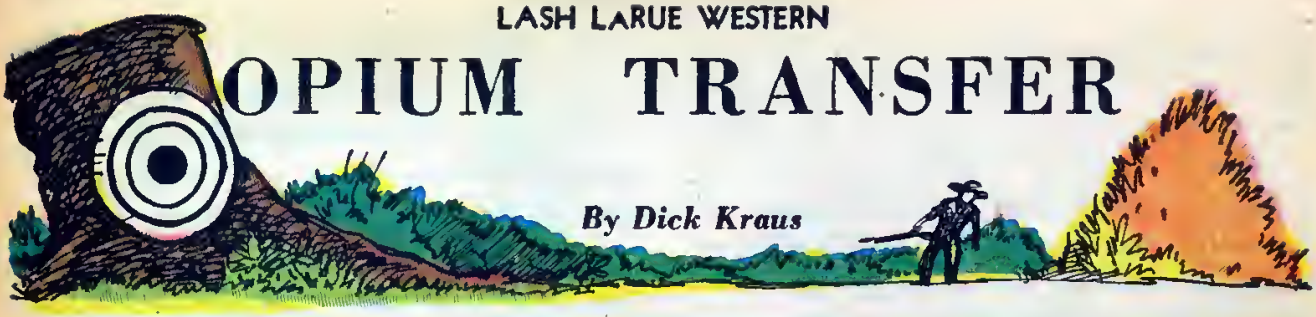






LASH LARUE WESTERN

OPIUM TRANSFER



By Dick Kraus

IT WAS DARK and gloomy in the little café that opened off a twisting side alley in the border town of Chad's Ferry. Dissolute men lined the scarred mahogany bar, nursing their drinks along. And, hunched toward each other at a rickety little table in the rear, two men talked quietly. One of these men was the young border patrolman, Slim Carson. . .

"You're sure of this, Pedro?" he questioned. "The shipment is ready to go across?"

"Por Dios!" nodded his companion, Captain Pedro Martinez of the Mexican secret police. "Our agents have been after these dogs for weeks! We know that they have a supply of opium that they are planning to smuggle into your country!"

"Hold on," broke in Slim, puzzled. "If that's so, why haven't you arrested them?"

Captain Martinez explained, "Because we want to catch the *entire* gang, amigo. We must wait until they attempt the transfer . . ."

"That's so," Slim Carson agreed. "But do you know who the gang members are, on the U. S. side of the border?"

Pedro Martinez shook his head slowly. "We are not sure," he replied. "But we suspect four Americans who arrived recently in Chad's Ferry. They pretend to be on a hunting trip, and they have applied for a permit to cross the Rio Grande. They are led by a man who calls himself Wayne Boutel—and who has a criminal record in your country! We do not think they will be foolish enough to attempt to carry the opium back across the river themselves. Instead, they will probably try some trick for getting it across! So, they must be watched, at every moment, by a man who will be as unrelenting as a bloodhound, and as inconspicuous as a leaf in the forest."

Slim Carson grinned. "I begin to get you, Pedro," he said quietly. "Where can I locate the varmints?"

The Mexican policeman leaned forward. "They are staying at the Empire Hotel, in Chad's Ferry," he whispered. "Tomorrow, they go across the river. I give them to you, Slim . . . and I have trust in mi amigo. . ."

Late in the afternoon of the next day, the American border patrolman crouched, half-hidden, behind a crimson clump of cholla, on the Mexican side of the border. All that day, he had stealthily trailed Wayne Boutel and the other three Americans, as they hunted through the brush, accompanied by two swarthy guides. Slim was mighty puzzled! For the Americans, armed with powerful long-range rifles, with telescopic sights, had done a great deal of shooting. At times they fired in regular volleys . . . almost as if they were fighting a battle!

And yet, they had shot no game! Not a deer, not a coyote, not a hare . . . not even a tiny prairie dog!

"All that shooting . . . and no results! I don't get it! And look at them, now! Grinning and carrying on, just as pleased as Punch!"

Cautiously, the slender lawman trailed Boutel and the others back to the bridge leading across the border to the United States. Uniformed guards waited there, to carry on the routine inspection.

Slim swung onto his claybank mare and wheeled about. "I'm sure those hombres haven't got the opium *with* them," he mused, "and I'll bet a silver cartwheel that they were working on the transfer this afternoon! But how did they do it?"

Quirting the claybank, he made his way back

to the section along the river where the hunting party had spent most of the afternoon. Slim dismounted and plunged into the brush.

Combing the area, he saw no signs of any slain or wounded game, or of where any of the bullets had landed. His brow began to knit! Just what had the Americans been aiming at? Then, past the river, on the other side, Slim saw a single cottonwood stump, half-hidden by greasewood trees. The stump was about five hundred yards away! With telescopic sights, it would be an easy target. . .

"I wonder," muttered Slim, examing the distant cottonwood through a pair of powerful field glasses. "The bark on that stump seems badly chewed up—and those gents were sure as blazes firing at something! S'pose I cross the river and take a look! I might find something interesting!"

Later that evening, Wayne Boutel and his friends went into a bar in Chad's Ferry. They had done a job that afternoon, and there was more work awaiting them that night. They were due for a cooling drink and a little relaxation—but they got neither! As Boutel stepped up to order, a slim, dark-haired youth already at tbe bar wheeled about to face him.

"Howdy, Mister," the young fellow said pleasantly. "Mebbe I can interest you in some mining samples I have here." His hand explored a breast pocket. . .

"Not interested," said the heavy jowled Boutel.

The stranger cut in again. "I think you'll be interested in *this*," he said sharply. His cupped hand opened and several flattened lead slugs rolled heavily across the bar. "Tree mining," the youth said. "I find bullets in old tree stumps! Ever do any of that, Mister Boutel?"

Wayne Boutel drew back, his eyes slitting in alarm. Behind him, he sensed his men going for their guns.

"Who *are* you, Mister," he husked, "and what's all this palaver about tree mining?"

"The handle's Slim Carson," the youth replied. "Mebbe you've heard of me. I was looking at an old cottonwood stump—"

Slim broke off as Wayne Boutel, mouthing an oath, dove for his waist gun. Hurling himself to the side, the slender lawman drew his own Colts. Moving in a blur of speed, Slim kicked over an oaken table and crouched behind it. Six-shooters roared and bullets whined through the bar, as panicky bystanders escaped through the batwing doors.

Coolly, Slim squeezed the triggers of his worn Colts again and again! First one outlaw toppled forward, and then another. Finally, Boutel himself clutched at his chest and tumbled convulsively to the floor, victim of the lawman's accurate gunfire.

As Slim Carson rose, the batwing doors were flung open and in hurtled Pedro Martinez, clutching a ready Remington. "Madre!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me you were back in town, Slim! I would have helped you with these hombres!"

"IT wasn't necessary, Pedro," Slim smiled. "I wanted to confront them with the results of my tree mining, first!"

"Your—*what??*" the Mexican asked.

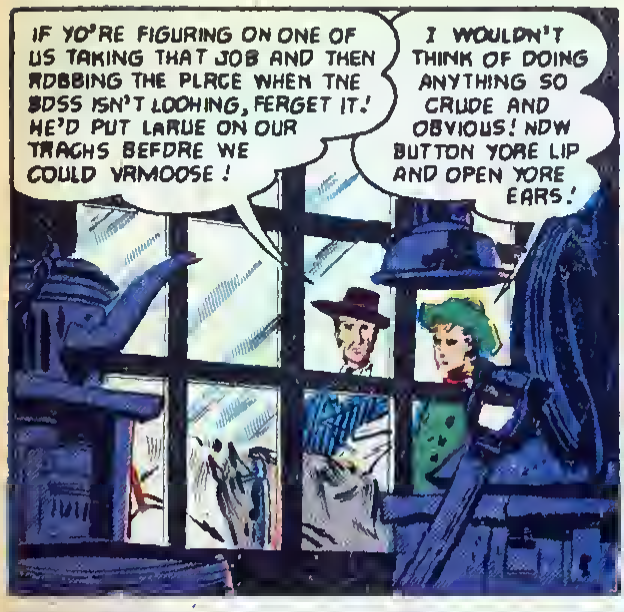
"My tree mining," Slim explained. "Boutel and his gang did a lot of shooting all afternoon, without hitting any game. When they returned to the States, I searched around, and found that they'd been aiming at an old cottonwood stump, on this side of the river! They'd filled it with lead slugs! And each slug was filled with a pellet of pure opium! Neat, eh?"

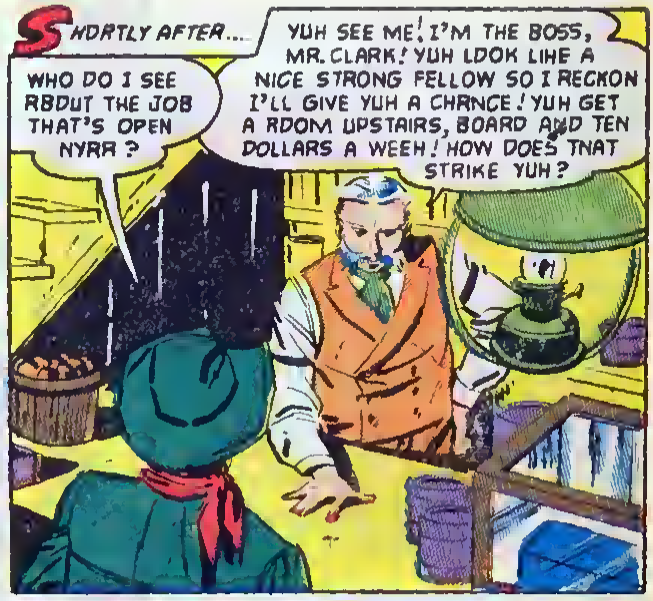
Pedro Martinez clapped Slim on the shoulder. "But this is one crop," he smiled, "that will never be sold to ruin the lives of innocent victims, thanks to you!"

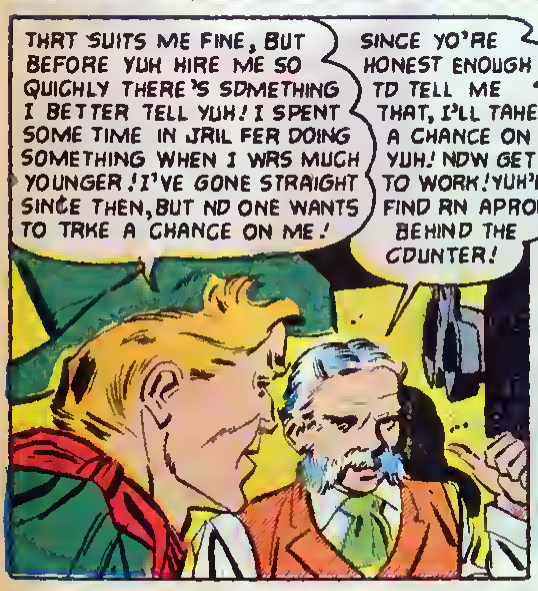
THE END

WAGONWHEELS
...WIDE OPEN REMARK!
WHY, THAR'S A FELLOW I USED TO WORK WITH A FEW YEARS AGO'
HOWDY, CHUM'
CHUM?
SHORE! I'M WAGONWHEELS, YOUR OLD PAL!
WE MAY HAVE BEEN FRIENDS SOME TIME AGO, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I WENT UP IN THE WORLD'
HE'S TRYING TO HIGH HAT ME' I'LL FIX HIM'
YUH'VE GONE UP IN THE WORLD,
THAT'S RIGHT! I'VE DECIDED TO BECOME AN AUTHOR!
AN AUTHOR'
YES! I'M GOING TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT THE GREAT OPEN SPACES!
YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT THE GREAT OPEN SPACES? HMM, YUH'VE HAD THAT IN YOUR HEAD A LONG WHILE, HAVEN'T YUH?
(ULP!)

"Lash" LARUE
in The Man with The Prison Record
THAT TAKES A LOT OF NERVE HOLDING THAT CARD IN YORE MOUTH!
IT DOESN'T TAKE ANY NERVE WITH THE KING OF THE BULLWHIP DOING THE TRICK!
HEY, RUXBY, DID YUH SEE THAT? THERE'S ONLY ONE HOMBRE WHO CAN HANDLE A BULLWHIP LIKE THAT--THE ROVING MARSHAL, LASH LARUE!
SNAP!
LASH LARUE! WE SURE PICKED SOME TOWN TO PULL A ROBBERY IN! LET'S KEEP RIDING UNTIL WE'RE FAR AWAY FROM HYAR, SNOOKER!
WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER WITHOUT MONEY! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUR HANDS ON SOME BEFORE WE PUSH ON!
BUT NO ONE IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD TAKE A CHANCE OF MIXING WITH LARUE!
I AGREE WITH YUH THERE, RUXBY, BUT THAT SIGN GIVES ME AN IDEA HOW WE COULD ROB THE GENERAL STORE WITHOUT TAKING ANY CHANCES!
GENERAL STORE
MAN WANTED


IF YO'RE FIGURING ON ONE OF US TAKING THAT JOB AND THEN RDBBING THE PLRCE WHEN TNE BDSS ISN'T LOOHING, FERGET IT! HE'D PUT LARUE ON OUR TRAGHS BEFDRE WE COULD VRMOOSE!
I WOULDN'T THINK OF DOING ANYTHING SO CRUDE AND OBVIOUS! NDW BUTTON YORE LIP AND OPEN YORE EARS!


SHDRTLY AFTER...
WHO DO I SEE RBDUT THE JOB THAT'S OPEN NYRR?
YUH SEE ME! I'M THE BOSS, MR. CLARK! YUH LDOK LIKE A NICE STRONG FELLOW SO I RECKON I'LL GIVE YUH A CHRNCE! YUH GET A RDOM UPSTAIRS, BOARD AND TEN DOLLARS A WEEH! HOW DOES TNAT STRIKE YUH?


THRT SUITS ME FINE, BUT BEFORE YUH HIRE ME SO QUICHLY THERE'S SDMETHING I BETTER TELL YUH! I SPENT SOME TIME IN JRIL FER DOING SOMETHING WHEN I WRS MUCH YOUNGER! I'VE GONE STRAIGHT SINCE THEN, BUT ND ONE WANTS TO TRKE A CHANCE ON ME!
SINCE YO'RE HONEST ENOUGH TD TELL ME THAT, I'LL TAHE A CHANCE ON YUH! NDW GET TO WORK! YUH'LL FIND RN APRON BEHIND THE CDUNTER!

CONSIDERING ALL THE MONEY I KEEP RROUND THE STORE, I MAY BE OUT DF MY MIND FER DOING TNIS, BUT I'LL KEEP R CLOSE EYE ON NIM!

THRT NIGHT...
EVER SINCE I HIRED SNOOHER, MY NERVES HAVE BEEN ON EDGE, BUT I'D SWEAR I HEARD SOMETHING THIS TIME!

I WAS RIGHT! IT'S SNODKER RND HE'S GDING DOWNSTAIRS! I WONDER IF NE OISCOVERED WHERE I HIDE MY MONEY!

NE'S UNBDLTING THE DODR! IT CDULD BE FER A QUICH GET-RWAY!

NO, HE'S JUST GOING OUT! MAYBE I'D BETTER FOLLDW HIM!

SHORTLY AFTER...
HE SEEMS TO BE HEADING FER THE RIVER!
I'LL JUST KEEP FOLLOWING HIM UNTIL I'M SURE OF WHAT HE'S UP TO!
NOW HE'S SITTING DOWN!
CLARK DOESN'T REALIZE I KNOW HE FOLLOWED ME! SO FAR EVERYTHING'S WORKING OUT LIKE I PREDICTED!
MEANWHILE...
THIS IS THE SPOT WE ARRANGED FER SNOOKER TO TOSS THE NOTE WHEN HE PRETENDED TO BE JUST TOSSING THE MATCH AWAY!
THIS MUST BE IT!
SO THAT'S WHERE CLARK HIDES HIS MONEY—UNDER THE FLOUR SACKS IN BACK OF THE STORE! WELL, WITH HIM BEING KEPT BUSY WATCHING SNOOKER BECAUSE HE THINKS HE'S AN EX-CONVICT, IT SHOULD BE A CINCH TO ROB THE PLACE!
AT THE SAME TIME....
WHOA, RUSH! IT'S A FUNNY TIME OF NIGHT FOR THE GENERAL STORE TO BE OPEN---ESPECIALLY SINCE THE STORE IS DARK! I'D BETTER HAVE A LOOK AND MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT INSIDE!
GENERAL STORE

MR. CLARK! MR. CLARK! IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
NO ANSWER! I'D BETTER GO UP AND SEE IF HE'S IN HIS ROOM!
BUT AS LASH GOES INTO CLARK'S ROOM.....
NOW TO LOCATE THE FLOUR SACKS!
HYAR IT IS!
I COULDN'T FIND CLARK, BUT IT SEEMS I DID FIND SOMETHING DOWN HERE--- TROUBLE!
YIPES!
SNAP!
LASH LARUE!
STAND JUST WHERE YOU ARE! I AIM TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH CLARK!
AND I AIM TO BEAT IT!
WHAM!
IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

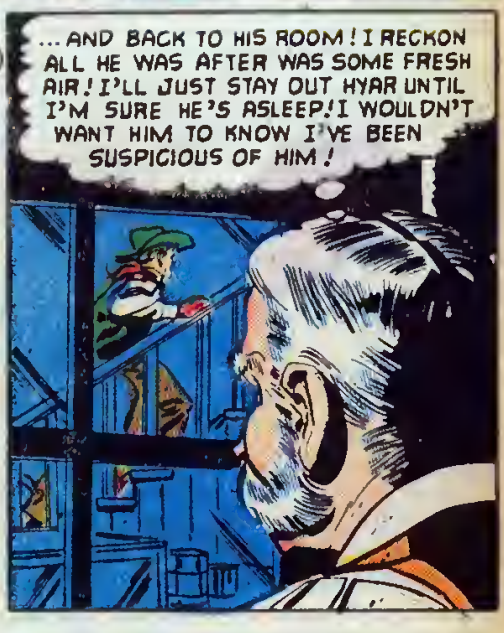
HOW CAN ANYTHING SO SOFT AS FLOUR PACK SUCH A WALLOP?
XXX
XXX

HE COULDN'T HAVE GONE FAR, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE TOUGH PICKING UP THAT VARMINT'S TRAIL IN THE DARK! I'D BETTER TAKE THIS MONEY WITH ME FOR SAFEKEEPING!

BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY! HIT THE TRAIL, RUSH!

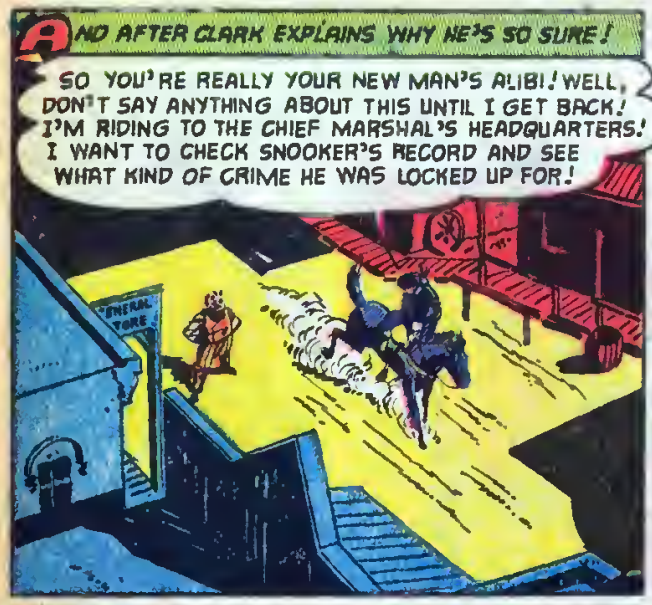
MEANWHILE...
NOW HE SEEMS TO BE GOING BACK TO TOWN! WELL, I'LL JUST KEEP FOLLOWING HIM!

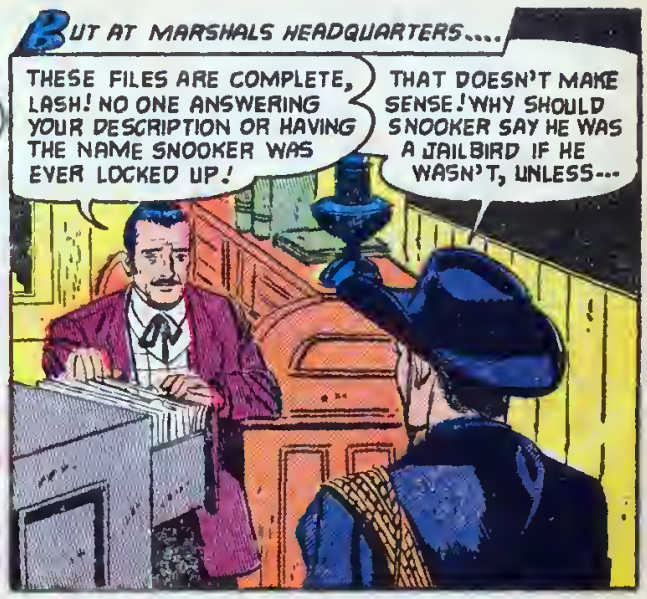
SHORTLY AFTER...
HE'S GOING RIGHT BACK INTO THE STORE...
GENERAL STORE


...AND BACK TO HIS ROOM! I RECKON ALL HE WAS AFTER WAS SOME FRESH AIR! I'LL JUST STAY OUT HYAR UNTIL I'M SURE HE'S ASLEEP! I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO KNOW I'VE BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF HIM!

MEANWHILE...
I LOST HIM IN THE DARK! THERE'S NO SENSE KEEPING UP THIS FUTILE CHASE! I'D BETTER GO BACK AND SEE IF I CAN FIND ANY TRACE OF MR. CLARK!

AND WHEN LASH REACHES THE GENERAL STORE.....
THERE YOU ARE! DON'T YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO GO OFF LEAVING THE DOOR TO YOUR STORE OPEN AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT? ONLY A FREAK COINCIDENCE OF MY PASSING SAVED YOU YOUR MONEY!
WHAT? ARE YUH SURE THAT'S MY MONEY? NO ONE KNOWS WHERE I KEEP IT -- THAT IS EXCEPT POSSIBLY MY HELPER, AND I KNOW HE COULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO ROB IT!

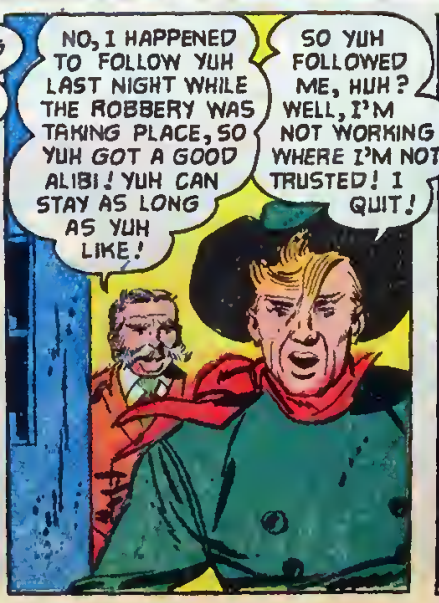

AND AFTER CLARK EXPLAINS WHY HE'S SO SURE!
SO YOU'RE REALLY YOUR NEW MAN'S ALIBI! WELL, DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS UNTIL I GET BACK! I'M RIDING TO THE CHIEF MARSHAL'S HEADQUARTERS! I WANT TO CHECK SNOOKER'S RECORD AND SEE WHAT KIND OF CRIME HE WAS LOCKED UP FOR!
GENERAL STORE


BUT AT MARSHALS HEADQUARTERS....
THESE FILES ARE COMPLETE, LASH! NO ONE ANSWERING YOUR DESCRIPTION OR HAVING THE NAME SNOOKER WAS EVER LOCKED UP!
THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! WHY SHOULD SNOOKER SAY HE WAS A JAILBIRD IF HE WASN'T, UNLESS---

---HE WANTED TO MAKE CLARK SO SUSPICIOUS OF HIM THAT CLARK WOULD WATCH HIS EVERY MOVE AND THEREBY MAKE IT EASY FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO ROB THE STORE! IT'S ONLY A HUNCH, BUT A STRONG ONE! HIT THE TRAIL, RUSH!

BACK AT THE GENERAL STORE...
OKAY, LASH, I'LL DO JUST AS YUH TOLD ME!

THE NEXT MORNING...
I GOT BAD NEWS FER YUH, SNOOKER! SOMEONE ROBBED THE STORE LAST NIGHT!
AND NOW YO'RE GOING TO BLAME ME BECAUSE I'M AN EX-CONVICT!


NO, I HAPPENED TO FOLLOW YUH LAST NIGHT WHILE THE ROBBERY WAS TAKING PLACE, SO YUH GOT A GOOD ALIBI! YUH CAN STAY AS LONG AS YUH LIKE!
SO YUH FOLLOWED ME, HUH? WELL, I'M NOT WORKING WHERE I'M NOT TRUSTED! I QUIT!

JUST AS I THOUGHT! INSTEAD OF BEING GRATEFUL FOR NOT BEING ACCUSED, HE FOUND A PHONY EXCUSE TO QUIT!

SHORTLY AFTER, IN THE WOODS.....
HYAR I AM, RUXBY! EVERYTHING WORKED OUT JUST LIKE I SAID IT WOULD! HOW MUCH MONEY WAS IN CLARK'S MONEY BAG?
WHAT ARE YUH TALKING ABOUT? LARUE BROKE UP THE ROBBERY!
WHAT ARE YUH TRYING TO DO---DOUBLE-CROSS ME? CLARK TOLD ME THE PLACE WAS ROBBED! NOW GIVE ME MY SHARE OR I'LL PLUG YUH!
BUT I'M TELLING YUH THE TRUTH! THAT LAWDOG GOT THE MONEY AND ALMOST CAUGHT ME!
I'LL TEACH YUH TO TWO-TIME ME!
DON'T! DON'T SHOOT! YO'RE MAKING A MISTAKE!
IF YOU ASK ME, YOU BOTH MADE A MISTAKE THINKING YOU COULD BEAT THE LAW!
IT'S LASH LARUE!
I TOLD YUH HE WAS IN ON IT!
BANG!
RUN FER IT!
SNAP!
SNAP!
NOW I'LL JUST PUT HANDCUFFS ON YOU AND THEN DROP YOU AT THE NEAREST JAILHOUSE! YOU TWO THOUGHT YOU WERE SO SMART, BUT IF YOU REALLY HAD BEEN SMART, YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU COULDN'T OUTWIT THE LAW!

JET PROPELLED ADVENTURE
in
FAWCETT'S FINEST COMICS
MASTER
BILL BOYD
YOUNG EAGLE
TEX RITTER
HOPALONG CASSIDY
BOB COLT
MOTION PICTURE COMICS
LASH LARUE
TOM MIX
ROCKY LANE
FAWCETT MOVIE COMIC
SOLDIER COMICS
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